

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

'WHATSOEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT!'—Paul.

No. 1,511.—VOL. XXIX. [Registered as] SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1909.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Gentle and receptive reader! we offer you our good wishes for this Christ Time and for the coming year. Will you respond, and wish us success in our ceaseless efforts to lessen the world's gloom and sorrow and increase its light and joy? Nor would we forget or ignore those who think we have been communing only with demons, and who even think that there are no companion-angels left. To you, perturbed souls! we offer the best of all good wishes:—that you may mount 'The hill of the Lord,' and have a wider view.

'The Divinity that shapes our Ends: An argument for the Existence and Power of God,' by Rev. C. A. Hall (Paisley: A. Gardner) is quite a modern little book. 'I hold a brief for God,' says the writer, and right earnestly he pleads, beginning by simply smashing and pulverising the old Jewish Jehovah with his imputed cruelty, selfishness and tyranny, and ending by finding God as the Fountain of Life in the creation of Nature and the evolution of Man. God is 'Living Substance' in a transcendental sense, and 'Finite Matter' is derived from Him:—

Life disposes Matter into orderly forms. Life so disposed Matter that it produced its first organic forms, and Life so disposed those first forms that their successors became varied from their ancestors. By the disposition of Life, in accordance with its tendency towards variation, and also the laws of heredity and adaptation, an indefinite number of life-forms have come into existence. By the same Living-Activity man was evolved. Life transcended its first forms because of its progressive and upward trend: the whole gamut of creation is a long series of Life-triumphs; each higher form, as it has appeared, has been a demonstration of the disposing power and the inherent potentiality of Life. Life has made heredity and conferred the power of adaptation, and Life is greater than they. And Life is the activity of God.

This will give to the initiated a sufficient idea of the tone and purpose of this animated little work.

Mr. Charles Voysey's recent sermon on 'The love of God the pledge of Immortality' is pathetic and beautiful, but is not entirely convincing: so many will feel the vagueness of the phrase 'the love of God,' and the awfulness of the doubt whether, in any sense, we know anything about how He can love every savage abroad or here. He says, 'The proposition I have to prove is this: Because God loves us, we must live for ever.' It is venturing a great deal on one belief: but he really means it, for he adds, 'If He does not love us there is no certainty, not even the shadow of a shade of a hope, that we shall ever live

again'; and this is followed by: 'For my part, I am not sure that I should care to live again, no, nor to live any longer if my Maker loves me not at all, nor cares for me more than were I a stone or a withered leaf.'

Well but, Mr. Voysey, suppose there is no God who is so humanly personal, and so personally emotional as you describe, would you not like to live again as a part of the infinite order of this glorious universe with its masterful law of Evolution? and suppose, according to that law of Evolution, you had naturally risen to the state of persistence into spirit life after the body's death, would you not bless that infinite order, and surrender to the splendour and the music of it with joy unspeakable? Let the agnostic have his way a little, so long as he tells you that he is prepared to welcome any hope of another voyage, and to sail on any sea, if you will but allow him to say 'I know' only when he does: and be sure you encourage him, not by risking everything on one throw of the dice, nor by refusing to care or play any more if that fails; but by stretching out hopeful and ready hands to whatever the universe promises and whatever the future has to give.

A smart woman writes, in 'The Nautilus,' concerning 'Environment.' She tells a bit of her own experience, thus:—

I was dissatisfied with my surroundings and desired to change them. I had often read and been told that you could always bring about new environments by polishing and brightening everything your hand touched.

Mine dropped down then half unconsciously upon my waste basket. I gazed upon it. It looked disreputable, dusty, and was full to overflowing with many things.

'I'll commence right now with you,' I exclaimed, as I pounced upon it.

I fairly flew downstairs with that basket.

I soaked it in hot suds. I scrubbed it inside and out with sulpho-naphthol. I dried it. I painted it. I varnished it.

I pronounced it good.

When I commenced, the maid in the kitchen looked anxious, and said, 'Why, what's the matter?'

I looked at her solemnly, and replied, 'I am going to change my environments.'

'Your what?'

'My environments.'

She still looked anxious until she saw what I meant.

From that moment my surroundings began to change. I brightened and I polished.

It is needless to say that my surroundings changed slowly but surely. One thing brightened necessitated another, and so on, and so on, as the law manifested in some particular direction.

This is the true way to begin to *change your environments* if you are not satisfied with them. Try it!

Of course, the duster and the 'sulpho-naphthol' did not do it all. When a woman is taken in that way, she takes pains with her hair, hoists the pretty pale blue ribbon and the smart brooch, and wears her nicest smile. O yes! it is a wonderful thing—this changing one's environment:—and it is cheap!

'The Ways of Love,' by Elizabeth Severs (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society), contains sixteen stories, dreams, phantasies, call them what you will. Any-



way, they are all well written, with a delicate but searching insight which gives intellectual satisfaction while, as stories, they please. Of course, one has to endure the emergence of the *motif* of reincarnation.

Mary Everest Boole tells the following story in a way which admits of no doubt as to its truth:—

In the course of a lesson which I was giving in a Home for Waifs and Strays, we came to the word 'blessing,' which I explained as 'something to be glad of and thankful for.' On the next Sunday I revised the ground previously gone over. When I asked: 'What does "blessing" mean?' a small child replied with great unction and an air of profound conviction, 'Treacle, ma'am.' It was evident that the poor little half-starved waif's imagination had been vividly impressed by the—to her—new phenomenon of plentiful and palatable food.

The little story has its pathetic side, but the teller of it suddenly plunges into Philosophy and Mathematics, as is her wont, and she surmises that, in certain circumstances, such a vivid impression and interpretation might have been the starting point for an idolatrous delusion or a true revelation. She says:—

The impression might crystallise round the material fact, treacle; in which case the girl's grandchildren might be found, some day, telling their grandchildren that, wherever the word 'blessing' occurs in a Sacred Book, it must mean treacle, and can mean nothing else; and that it is profane and wicked to use it in connection with anything else. Or the girl might be led to connect the word 'blessing' not with the material object which aroused her emotions, but with the sense of mystery and wonder and gratitude evoked in her by the material object. In that case, the pleasure of eating treacle, in itself a selfish and merely sensuous one, would become, for her, truly Sacramental; a perpetual renewer of the sense of Communion with Mankind and with The As-Yet-Unknown Good.

This may seem far-fetched, but it really is not. A sufficiently industrious person, sufficiently well acquainted with Folk Lore—say Andrew Lang—might find, in plenty of Sacramental things and Revelations, beginnings not very unlike the identification of 'blessing' with the, to the little waif, heavenly luxury of treacle. Some sacred observances, rituals, vestments and symbols had queer origins.

#### SPIRITUAL PRAYERS.

(From many Shrines.)

Infinite Spirit, from whom and in whom all things and all creatures live and move and have their being: Lord of the forces that command the onflowing of all life: Inspirer of all Thy children on their great march from stage to stage, ever upward towards Thy Heaven of light and love: we thank Thee for all; and chiefly for Thy Christs, the saviours of the world; and, above all, for Thy Christ of Palestine, still before us and above us, a guide, an inspiration, an example and a spiritual power. We long for his victory over all our evil passions and sordid ways. Help us to be his helpers, in the unceasing war against every form of misery and sin, that Thy kingdom may come and Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Amen.

FROM 'THE BLUE BIRD.'—Maeterlinck's famous play, 'The Blue Bird,' at the Haymarket Theatre, is not only a beautiful allegory, but contains a scene that should have a special significance to Spiritualists. The two children around whom the play centres are accompanied by the spirits of various homely elements and animals, 'Bread,' 'Milk,' 'Water,' 'Sugar,' 'the Dog,' and 'the Cat,' but their guide and guardian is (appropriately enough) 'Light.' It is 'Light' who, in the course of their wanderings, takes them to the gate of the churchyard where at midnight the two children are to meet the dead. The witching hour strikes, and the boy, in obedience to the fairy's mandate, turns in his cap the magic diamond which reveals the inner realities of things. The result is startling. There is a brief period of darkness and the old churchyard is shown transfigured and full of beautiful lilies. Bewildered, the children gaze around. 'Where are the dead?' cries the little girl. And the boy answers, 'There are no dead.'

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#### THE SIKH PROPHET.

The name of Sikh is chiefly associated, in the mind of an Englishman, with the idea of brave soldiers and fine physique; very few have any notion at all concerning the religious beliefs of the race of men who have so distinguished themselves in the history of our Indian Empire. The religion of the Sikhs is not very ancient: it dates from the middle of the fifteenth century. Its founder was Nanak, who was born at Talvanda, not far from Lahore, in 1469. His father was a farmer, and his occupation, as a lad, was to mind the crops in his father's fields; a task which he seems to have performed very badly, for we are told that he allowed the fields to be overrun with cattle. He was a dreamer of dreams, and annoyed his family by preferring the society of fakirs to the work assigned to him. His parents tried in vain to check tendencies which they regarded as simply lazy. On one occasion we are told that when urged to work 'he fell down,' which may mean that he fell into a trance. On another occasion he replied to his father's expostulations by referring to a 'private field,' adding, 'The Lord, for whom I have done farming work, gives me assistance.' Such utterances only provoked opposition, and his family said, 'He is mad.' But Nanak was misunderstood; his vocation was not to plough fields and sow seeds on the plane of matter, but, in the words of the Adi Granth, the Sikh Scripture, to apply the 'plough of truth,' and to 'sow the Name in hope.'

The influences which moved him were, no doubt, incomprehensible to his more practical relatives, but they were not without important results, since they ultimately led to his becoming the prophet of the Sikh Religion. In its essence that religion was not new, for the mission of Nanak was to proclaim those truths which lie at the root of all religions, namely, the unity of God, the immanence of God in all things, and the brotherhood of mankind.

How this call came to him is recorded in a document called the 'Janam Sakhi of Baba Nanak.' This document was obtained by Dr. Trumpp, the translator of the Adi Granth, from the library of the India Office, and proved to



be a manuscript of considerable antiquity, which was probably put together within sixty-five years of the prophet's death. The narrative seems to embody in a symbolic form an account of a genuine experience: some spiritual illumination seems to have been given to him which doubtless was incommunicable except in a sort of parable. It is as follows:—

One day Nānak went to the river to bathe: stripping off his clothes, he entrusted them to his servant, and angels took him away to the threshold of the Lord, and said, 'Sir, Nānak is present.' Then he (Nānak) obtained a gift of a sight of the true courts (of God); the Lord was kind (to him). Meanwhile the servant (of Nānak) was standing by his clothes; he finally returned (home), and said that Nānak had gone into the river, but had not come out again. He went to the Khan and said, 'Khan, help! Nānak has gone into the river, but no more comes out!' [Here is related the search for Nānak, and regret of the Khan at not finding him.] It was the order of the Lord that Nānak the devotee was present (at the threshold). Then a cup of nectar was filled and given him by order (of the Lord). The command was given, 'Nānak, this nectar is a cup of my Name, drink it.' The Guru made salutation and drank it. The Lord was kind to Nānak and said, 'Nānak, I am with thee, I have made thee exalted, and who will take thy name will be made exalted by me. Having gone, mutter my Name and make also other people mutter it. Remain uncontaminated from the world. (Remain in the Name) in (giving) alms, in performing ablutions, in worship, and remembering (me) I have given thee my own Name; do this work (I have told thee)!'

After this we are told that Nānak returned to the house, and continued in silence for one day; then he arose and said: 'There is no Hindu and no Mussulman!' At that time the enmity between Hindus and Mussulmans was bitter and rancorous. It is significant that the first result of his 'call' was to break down distinctions between them.

Whether the incident above quoted relates a dream or a trance is of no consequence, the essential point is, that Nānak received a call to make God's name manifest, and to remain 'uncontaminated' from the world; and that its immediate effect was to produce in him this conviction of unity between hitherto separated sects—Nānak refused to recognise caste. He is said to have taught: 'Thou, O God, acknowledgest the light that is in man, and dost not ask after his caste. For in the other world there is no caste.' And again, 'the Guru of the Gurus is one, the garbs many.' In these sayings he clearly recognises the Divine unity as the equalising factor amid all diversities.

After this call he spent his days wandering from place to place with a companion who played the rebeck and chanted his sayings. He rapidly gained a hearing, although sometimes he met with contempt and rejection. It is said that he led men to confession and repentance. His work was to strip off all false disguises and to bring the conscience into the clear light of reality.

On one occasion we are told that he laughed whilst a Kazi was offering prayers in a mosque, and when called upon to explain such irreverence, he said he had laughed to think how useless were the Kazi's utterances, for while praying, he was thinking of a foal which he had left by an open well, and wondering whether the creature would fall in. Then the Kazi fell at his feet and confessed that Nānak had said what was true.

A portion of the *Adi Granth*, *Mahala I*, is attributed directly to Nānak, and this portion is of great interest and breathes a spirit of great devotion, and sincerity. The Name of God is its theme, but this expression denotes, as it does also in the Bible, the character of God, and is always associated with His truth in the hearts and lives of men.

This is clearly indicated in such passages as the following:—

So pure is God's Name, who ever obeyeth God knoweth the pleasure of it in his own heart.

All virtues are Thine, O Lord, none mine, there is no devotion without virtue.

Nānak taught that religious ceremonial is of no avail apart from the doing of His will. It is the desire to please Him which alone gives worth to external acts:—

I bathe at a Tirtha if I please Him, without pleasing Him what shall I do with bathing?

He who heareth and obeyeth God in his heart shall wash off his impurities in the place of pilgrimage within him.

This lofty spirituality was not unpractical, for Nānak also taught that to be truly mindful of God's Name would rid the mind of anxiety, that fruitful source of evil.

He says: 'If he mind It (*i.e.*, the Name) he does not anxiously go his way.'

Nānak had found the secret of a quiet mind, and refused to believe that faith in God and worry can subsist side by side. He was, also, aware that self-assertion and pride must be dissolved in such an atmosphere. The knowledge of God must make a man humble:—

Oh Nānak! If one understand His order he will not speak in self-conceit.

I am not chaste nor learned, foolish and stupid I was born. All virtues are Thine, I have none.

This reminds us of the psalmist's words: 'All my fresh springs are in Thee.'

Humility is, perhaps, the most sure token of spirituality; a man's growth in the knowledge of God will be attested by the depth of his humility.

At his death both Hindus and Mussulmans claimed him as belonging to them. Their esteem for him was not strong enough, however, to unite them, and very soon the two sects became fierce enemies. This is sad; but the history of Christendom presents a similar inconsistency. Christ came to bind mankind together, and his name should be a bond of brotherhood, but his followers have often made it a cause of division and controversy.

A successor of Nānak was called Guru Arjun. He it was who compiled the *Adi Granth*. The words *Adi Granth* mean 'The Book.' It is said that the Sikhs told him that by 'hearing the words of Guru Nānak tranquillity came to mind and desire for worship increased'; but that 'numerous other verses to which the name of Baba Nānak was given, only tended to pride and worldly wisdom.' This led him to compile the *Granth*, which is a collection of sayings, or hymns, chiefly concerning the Name of God. Some of these are beautiful, but they are rather monotonous to read. *Mahali I*, which, as I have said, is attributed to Nānak himself, is, however, very interesting, and contains the essential elements of his teaching.

Here is a hymn from another portion of the *Granth*. This is said (or was formerly said) as an evening prayer:—

In all (creatures) is light. He is the light.

From his light, light is made in all.

By the testimony of the Guru the light becomes manifest, What is pleasing to him, that becomes an illumination.

O heart knowing Supreme Being!

O Disposer of the destiny!

Make full the hearts of faith;

Thy slave, Nānak, asks this comfort, make me the dust of thy saints.

(Other Gurus also call themselves Nānak.)

Those who desire to learn more about these Scriptures will find (in the British Museum) a full translation of the *Granth*, with such information as could be obtained, in a large volume edited by Dr. Trumpf, who devoted a great deal of attention to this subject, and took much pains to find out all he could concerning Nānak. It is to his learned work that I am indebted for the matter dealt with in this article.

H. A. DALLAS.

#### THE PURPOSE OF EXISTENCE.

Mr. E. Wake Cook delivered an able and interesting address on 'The Purpose of Existence' to the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance on Thursday, the 16th inst., at the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall. A full report of this address will commence in our next issue.



## THE ALCHEMY OF THE SOUL.

It is generally understood that under the guise of the transmutation of metals the ancient alchemists referred in their writings to processes whereby the baser elements in the human mind can be transformed into higher ones, and the whole personality raised to a higher plane of motive and action. This theme is elaborated, illustrated, and explained by Dr. Franz Hartmann in his book, 'With the Adepts,' an English translation of which has just been published.\*

The book takes the form of a narrative of the 'adventure' of a man who has been studying the history of Rosicrucianism, and who is exploring a remote valley in the mountains between Bavaria and the Tyrol. He leaves his physical body, and is conducted into another valley, where he finds a great monastery, the home of a community of adepts, 'Brothers of the Golden and Rosy Cross.' Here many things are explained to him, the first being that all mysterious spiritual powers are 'the effect of that one primordial power which is called the Will, and which called the world into existence. It manifests itself in various ways, but it is always the same divine power, acting through the organism of man, who directs it by his intelligence.' Everything that is useful is accomplished, not by man's separate or independent will, but by employing reason and intelligence to guide and conduct the universal will-power in Nature. Will and Life are fundamentally identical, and Will endows the creations of imagination with life: but this refers to the spiritual will-power which resides in the heart, not that merely exercised by the brain. 'It is that which man desires with his heart, not that which he merely imagines with his brain, which has real power,' and therefore men should not come into possession of spiritual powers until they become virtuous and good. Man should use his intellect in accordance with reason; in animals instinct takes the place of reason, and the sheep knows that the tiger is his enemy. If a sheep were to become intellectual and study the anatomy and physiology of the tiger, it might lose sight of its internal nature and be devoured by it. So man has developed intellectuality without regard to its true function, which is to understand the truth which is instinctively or intuitively felt by the soul. Man must become natural before he can be spiritually strong. The meaning of Alchemy is thus set forth:—

The invisible principles of which the constitution of man is made up are called his *metals*, because they are more lasting and enduring than flesh and blood, and will continue to exist after the perishing elements of the physical body have been dissolved. Man's animal principles are the base metals of which his animal organisation consists; they must be changed into nobler metals by transforming his vices into virtues, until they turn into the gold of pure spirituality. To accomplish this it is necessary that the grossest elements in his astral form should die, so that the light of the spirit may penetrate through the hard shell and call the inner man into life and activity. . . . If you can bring the forces within yourself into harmony with those existing in the universe, the powers of Nature will be yours, and you will be able to guide and control them.

Much is said—perhaps this is the main theme of the book—about the advantage of forming a community of earnest students, and special emphasis is laid on the necessity for admitting only those who are strong and virtuous, who have overcome preconceived opinions and prejudices, who desire not merely to obtain knowledge for their own personal benefit but to let the light grow within themselves. The religious orders were originally intended for the 'purpose of raising man up into a higher and spiritual state of existence,' but they and the priesthood in general have lost sight of the higher conditions and powers; while as for men of science, 'the vast majority of our thinkers are continually engaged in thinking the wrong way, because they are engaged all their lives in prying into the manifestations of life on the outward plane, and do not seem to care a straw about what is taking place within the inner life of the soul.'

\* 'With the Adepts: An Adventure among the Rosicrucians.' By FRANK HARTMANN, M.D. Wm. Rider and Son, Limited, 164, Aldersgate-street, E.C. Price 2s. 6d. net, or 2s. 10d. post free from Office of 'LIGHT.'

In spite of the constantly repeated deprecations of the search for occult power for selfish or even for any personal ends, we cannot help thinking that there is a subtle appeal, such books as this, to the innate love of personal power as to the desire for knowledge, not entirely as a means for usefulness, but as an individual distinction and mark of superiority. Power and knowledge entail great responsibilities on their possessor, and we do not think it is well that a man should have more of either than he is willing to use for the service of his fellow men. The adventure described in this book concludes with an experience that teaches the narrator that he has not yet progressed beyond the reach of the temptations that beset humanity, and this, perhaps, may serve as a warning. As for monasteries in solitudes, though the idea may be fascinating, and a place for temporary retreat and recuperation may have its desirability, we do not recommend seekers after spirituality to flee from the world, but rather, with all the power at their disposal, to endeavour to overcome the evil of the world, both for themselves and for others.

## STARTLING SPONTANEOUS PSYCHIC PHENOMENA.

(Continued from page 603.)

One morning in November, 1908, we were startled by another and more dangerous manifestation—namely, spontaneous fires in various parts of the house. The first things that caught fire were the curtains of a child's bed. A servant girl rushed out of the room in which the bed was, and said that the curtains were burning. We ran towards the place and saw them in flames. At first our suspicion fell upon the girl herself; but soon after, when we found other things catching fire, and in places to which the girl had no access, we had to absolve her of the deed. The fire, as a rule, occurred in places where there was nobody at the time. Its first indication was the smell of something burning, and then it was the smoke that pointed out the exact spot. The way in which it occurred was also remarkable. When most of the persons in the house were in one place trying to put out the fire there, or busy with something else, a fresh fire broke out in some other part of the house. This kind of thing went on for several hours each day. The time usually was between 8 a.m. and 12 noon, and after an interval of some hours it again went on between 4 p.m. and 10 or 11 p.m. The fires continued for three days, and a number of articles were burnt up. But it is curious that none of them were of much value. Although in this way the actual loss was inconsiderable, yet the anxiety and the alarm were very great. The fact that the fire occurred in such parts of the house as were deserted at the time, together with the fact that nothing of value was destroyed, at first led us as to believe that some servant or servants were responsible for it, although they had been too clever to be detected. But the following occurrences soon dispelled that notion. In an open room, in a prominent part of the house, in the presence of a number of persons assembled there, a thin wreath of smoke was seen rising from the corner of a wooden bench lying there. The person who first saw it pointed it out to the others at once. They all examined the place but could not discover either a burnt match or a piece of burning coal—the usual means of lighting a fire. When I examined the burning spot I noticed that it was very small and round, instead of a long streak of black which a burning match lying there would have caused. It was also unlike the mark usually left by a piece of burning coal, which is larger and more irregular in contour. Besides, in the case of a match or a burning coal, the person applying it would have required some time to make the wood ignite, and could not have done it undetected in the presence of so many persons.

The other event, which was still more mysterious, was the burning of a dress which was locked up in a wardrobe. A few minutes after the occurrence I have just mentioned, one of my sisters happened to remark that things were getting



serious, and pointing towards her wardrobe wondered whether anything in that would catch fire next. She had hardly spoken when some of the people near became conscious of the peculiar odour of some woollen stuff burning. My sister naturally thought of her clothes, and opening the wardrobe she found that an article of dress belonging to her had two or three small holes in it, the edges of which were burning slowly. The shock which this event gave to most of us may be imagined. There could be no attempt now to attribute the fires to any of the servants, or, indeed, to any mortal being. As the wardrobe had remained locked until the moment it was opened, it was impossible to believe that a servant could have done the deed. It would have been equally absurd to suppose that my sister herself, or any other member of the family who could obtain the key, had done it. Granting, however, that this was possible as a practical joke, the supposition involves a difficulty which cannot be got over—namely, that for more than half an hour a number of people had remained in the room not far from that wardrobe, and nobody had opened it in their presence. If it had been opened before that, how was it that so much time elapsed before the burning smell was noticed? Fire does not usually take such a long time to make only two or three small holes in a woollen stuff. In half an hour all the contents of the wardrobe would have been in flames.

After the fire ceased, stone-throwing, which had been going on as a by-play for some time, became more prominent. It commenced in the room in which shot had been found, and then gradually extended to other parts of the house. Sometimes the stones fell in open places, such as the yard, &c., and seemed to come from outside, which made us think that it might be the work of some mischievous persons passing along the road. But we could not in this manner account for the stones which fell inside the house, much less for some that seemed to come through a dead wall. A nephew of mine (about twenty years of age), who had stationed himself in the room which had been the chief scene of these occurrences, declared that he once saw a fairly large stone coming from somewhere midway between the ceiling and the top of the door, out of the wall, as it were. As he was standing in front of the door, his first impression was that the stone was actually falling on him. He fully believed this at the moment, and hastily moved aside, and the stone fell at his feet, but without touching him. One of my brothers also had a similar experience.

Now I come to the most wonderful occurrence of this series. After the stone-throwing had gone on for some time it occurred to me to lock up one of the rooms to see whether any stones would get in there. Accordingly one of the rooms, in which the thing had happened before, was locked up after having been carefully examined in order to make certain that there were no stones lying in it. When it was opened again after a few hours we were astonished to find a number of stones arranged in the form of a circle in one of the corners. We removed them and locked the door of the room again, having previously fastened all the other doors and windows from inside. After some time the room was opened, and there was the circle of stones again. It is worth while mentioning that the circular form in which the stones were arranged was not merely accidental, but seemed to have been chosen deliberately. To explain this I must go back a little and inform the reader that soon after the commencement of the fires and the stone-throwing, on the advice of some friends who have strong belief in the existence of evil spirits, some of the members of my family had consulted some reverend gentlemen who professed to have the power of exorcising them, and had obtained from them certain charms for that purpose. One of the things given by one of those gentlemen happened to be a rosary, which he directed to be hung up in the room in which the supernatural manifestations had been most prominent. The rosary was hung up on a peg on the wall in the room which we locked up. The circle of stones was found right under it each time. Hence the conclusion was that the spirit had resented the reverend gentleman's interference, and had arranged the stones in a circle in mockery; the circle being

a humorous, though somewhat crude, attempt at a counterfeit presentment of the charmed rosary.

The phenomena of the stones continued for over a fortnight, and then stopped. To this day we have not been able to learn any more about them or about the fires than we did at the time.

There are more arguments against than in favour of the supposition that some servant or servants had a share in it. First of all, we had no new servants at that time, and not one of the old servants was clever enough to do such things. Secondly, no mortal servant could arrange stones in a circle in a room, all the doors of which had been fastened, or make things burn in a wardrobe which was locked up.

Revolving these things in my mind, I have come to the conclusion that

‘There are more things in heaven and earth  
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.’

### A THREEFOLD DREAM-WARNING.

BY FRED. W. EDWARDS, F.R.P.S.L., F.C.S.

The occurrences which I am about to relate gain in significance from the fact that full and conclusive evidence of the truth of what I say exists in the title deeds of nearly half the houses and landed property in a beautiful little Derbyshire village. Moreover, the chief character in this village drama was a near and dear relative of my own—one whom ‘I have loved long since and lost awhile.’

Now that all the other persons who figure in this narrative have also departed this life, I am able to relate this piece of family history without awaking unhappy memories in the minds of any. When my dear departed relative was a girl, her father died and left her in his will a number of houses and fields to be held in trust for her until she became of age. She, however, was too young to know anything about being her father's heiress, and when her mother married again became the drudge of her stepfather's family of children, for he had been a widower with a family. The girl's mother and stepfather schemed to obtain possession of the property to which she was legally entitled, and by the connivance of the trustee, an old man, who lived not far from the famous Repton Grammar School, the girl was robbed of her heritage, which was soon squandered away. Her mother and stepfather treated her with great harshness, and she had no knowledge of the great wrong that they were doing to her. One night as she lay awake in bed she heard a voice calling ‘Mary, Mary,’ and looking towards the foot of her bed she saw her father's form dressed in his old smock-frock, as she faintly recollected having seen him when he was alive.

‘Go to Repton and ask Mr. H. if he is doing right by you,’ said her father, and then he disappeared. Next morning the girl thought that it must have been a dream, and she related it to no one.

But on the next night her father appeared again at the foot of her bed and said, ‘Mary, Mary, go to Repton and ask Mr. H. if he is doing right by you.’ All the next day she was sorely troubled by the mysterious message, which she could not understand. ‘Who was Mr. H.? What wrong had he done her?’ were the thoughts that ran through her mind.

Her dread of going to bed again was amply justified by a third appearance of her father, who asked her sorrowfully why she did not obey him. This decided her, and the next morning she set off to walk to Repton without saying a word to anyone. Perplexed and bewildered, when she had found the house and was invited in, she felt afraid to deliver the message. She asked the old gentleman whom she saw if he was Mr. H. ‘Yes,’ he answered; ‘and what brings you here?’ ‘Please, Mr. H.,’ she said, innocently, ‘my father came to my bedside three times and told me to go to you and ask you if you were doing right by me.’

The old man turned pale, sank back in his chair, and in a broken voice exclaimed: ‘My God, I haven't done right, but, please God, I'll do right now!’

His repentance came too late, for though he did all he could to undo the great wrong to his ward, to which he had been a party, her inheritance was almost totally gone.



## THE PLACE AND PURPOSE OF RITUAL.

On Thursday evening, the 2nd inst., Mr. Stanley Jast delivered an address on 'The Place and Purpose of Ritual in the Spiritual Life' to the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance at the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East.

(Continued from page 608.)

'The immediate object of Ritual is to make an "occult field." The preparatory ceremonies are all intended to secure this end—to act on matter in a given space so that it may be prepared for the downrush of forces from the spiritual plane. The first draws the limits of the field, material and astral, as when incense is burned in the four quarters of the church. Processions in or around sacred buildings are methods of defining the field. The sun in its daily and annual journey strikes the limits of an occult field in which the forces which emanate from it play and hold sway. Having struck out the field, the next step is its purification and neutralisation by sprinkling water and burning incense. The field is now prepared. This field is the key to all ritual. The object to which all else contributes is to secure a stress or strain in the astral field which in turn reacts upon and sets up a stress in the auras, or subtle bodies, of those within that field. All the objects used have been helpful in securing this stress. These objects are charged with appropriate force by being consecrated. All consecrated objects are used only by the priest. When not in use they are wrapped in silk or linen, and if touched by any other person they must be reconsecrated to dismiss the alien matter. A change may take place in the subtle part and leave the physical matter unchanged. This is illustrated by the fact that water which has been magnetised heals diseases—the change has been in the subtle water, not in the water of the chemist.

'The Ritual of Blessing Holy Water is a means by which the priest emphasises and strengthens his imagination and projects power and force into the water by his reinforced will.

'Water is the symbol of the purified subtle bodies, which are kept pure by the salt of wisdom; and the sign of the cross, or of consecration, is used in order to seal the force and keep it there for a comparatively long time.

'Here is part of this ritual :—

Having signed himself with the sign of the Cross, the priest commences the benediction of the salt and water before him, in the following manner : 'I exorcise thee, O creature of salt, by the living God, by the true God, by the holy God; by that God who by the prophet, Eliseus, commanded thee to be cast into the water to cure its barrenness; that thou mayst by this exorcism be made beneficial to the faithful, and become to all those who make use of thee healthful, both to soul and body; and that in what place soever thou shalt be sprinkled, all illusions and wickedness, and crafty wiles of Satan may be chased away and depart from that place, and every unclean spirit commanded in His name, who is to come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.

'This is followed by a prayer, after which the priest utters the following "Exorcism of the Water" :—

I exorcise thee, O creature of water, in the name of God the Father Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son our Lord, and in the virtue of the Holy Ghost; that thou mayst, by this exorcism, have power to chase away all the power of the enemy; that thou mayst be enabled to cast him out, and put him to flight with all his apostate angels, by the virtue of the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who is to come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.

'After another prayer the priest mingles the salt with the water, saying :—

May this salt and water be mixed together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

'This is called an "exorcism," but it is really a "charging" rather than a "banishing" ceremony.' The lecturer then read from an old Catholic book of exorcisms for casting out devils an example of a true 'banishing ceremonial,' and looking at it solely from the point of view of the intention of the writer, he realised that there was superb vigour, poetry, and power

in the very language. The words were intended rather for the operator than for the beings addressed, who must be expelled by the force of the operator's will. 'The recital of these words works him up into an intensely positive condition—so that he is focussed and can hurl a great force against the obsessing entity and banish it.'

The following is the 'Form of Exorcism' :—

Woe unto thee, thou who hast made a treaty with Death and a compact with Hell! . . . Woe unto thee, whose rejoicings at the day of thy creation are changed into wailings everlasting! . . . Woe unto thee, whose sins are written with an iron pen and graven in thy heart with an adamant nail! . . . Woe unto thee, into whom rottenness hath entered, and out of whose infection the worms of falsehood are born, for nothing remaineth intact within thee! . . . Woe unto thee, who wert created that thou shouldst see light; and lo, thou hast taken hold on darkness! . . . The days of mourning for a dead man are seven, but for the damned they endure throughout eternity! . . . Woe unto thee who art for ever banished from the country of celestial citizens and from the society of the Angels! . . . Woe unto thee, over whose head fly the owls, and wild beasts make their den, and whose face is black with the smoke of Hell! . . . Woe unto thee that spoilest, shalt thou not also be spoiled? . . . Woe unto thee, woe unto thee, who shalt deliver thee from the strong archer, Christ! . . . Woe unto thee, unless thou departest now, *now!* out of this creature! . . . Go therefore out from him, in the name of the Most Sacred Trinity, indivisibly divided, and divisibly joined in One!

'The general principles which I have enunciated may be applied to any rituals, but especially to those of the Roman Catholic Church, which are more occult than those of other Christian bodies. The most striking of these is the Sacrament of the Mass.

'A Sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same and a pledge to assure us thereof." An outward sign, a definite action; inward grace, a magical or spiritual process having definite effects: its sacramental aspect. I have not time to do more than give a brief outline of the high symbolic and spiritual meaning of this Sacrament.

'The general "field" is here the church itself; this by the original consecration of the building. Within the church the smaller field is the choir, and the centre of the field is the altar. In one who is receptive, entrance into the building will induce an attitude of prayer and devotion.

'Every object used in the ceremony is consecrated and employed for no other purpose.

'The priest prepares himself by putting on his consecrated garments, and as he does so repeats a special prayer with each garment. There is a spiritual significance attached to every article of his apparel. Thus the cassock, which is black, or neutral, represents an expanse of space—before a "field" is made. The priest washes his finger-tips; this is the purification of the organs of action. The six other garments probably symbolise the subtle bodies. That this is so is indicated in the prayer when putting on the stole—the long strip of brocade worn over the shoulders with the two ends hanging in front of the alb, the white tunic reaching to the feet over the cassock. This prayer commences: "Restore to me, O Lord, the robe of immortality." What is this but the spiritual body? The prayers are for the purifying and harmonising of the subtle bodies in order that they may serve as fit vehicles for the power soon to be poured down from the spiritual world.

'The Ritual field is now prepared, outlined, and emphasised by the sprinkling of holy water, burning of incense, and chanting of prayers and verses of ritual, or "mantras"—words of power—in several positions in the choir to bring the vibrations of the officiating priest and his two assistants into harmony. They form a united triangle, a kind of living battery, and a clairvoyant would see the lines of force, like trembling light, passing from one to the other. The deacon and sub-deacon thus guard the aura of the priest, whose subtle bodies are put to great strain during the central part of the ceremony. The great moment approaches. The victim, in the shape of bread



and wine, is offered up on the altar. Over the bread is pronounced the word of power: "For this is my Body"; over the wine: "For this is the chalice of my Blood." At this moment great spiritual potencies are in action. The subtle matter of the hidden world is, as it were, drawn into a gyratory whirl, and, through the funnel thus formed, there pours down into the bread and wine and, through these, over the whole ritual field, a great stream of spiritual energy—fire from the divine exhaustless fountain of His brilliance. To the eye of the body the bread is still bread, the wine is still wine—but to the opened eye of the soul they are transformed into the body and blood of Christ.

In concluding his address the lecturer said: "All occultism is based on the fact that a great Being can vitalise and pour his essence into material sanctified by Will and by the words and signs of power. Beyond the physical bread is the subtle bread of the inner planes of being, and above all is the ensouling Idea—that of sustenance. "Spiritual bread" is not a mere phrase, it is, in its own world. The finer matter answers swiftly to the play of thought, and a rearrangement of this matter may take place when the rigid matter of the physical remains unchanged. The mind of man is ever changing, but the body does not change; neither do the "accidents" of bread and wine, but subtle matters are changed. The matter of the spiritual world, is it not verily the Body of Christ, as it were, within the outer garments of the lower worlds which hide Him from us? And the Life of the spiritual world, what should it be but His Blood—which is Divine Wisdom—flowing out from the great Heart of the Universe to nourish and sustain His creatures!"

"As for me, I take, as sober fact, that description of one of the "Fathers," who tells us that at the supreme point of the sacrifice of the Mass a great hierarchy of Angelic Beings stretches up from the sanctuary, through whose ranks streams a great flood of glory from a Divine source beyond, and makes of the temple a living sea of Light, in whose sanctifying beams the souls and bodies of the worshippers may bathe and be refreshed, so that they may take back to the outer life a memory and a peace which will not readily fade away." (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN, Mr. H. Withall, said that he thought that a great deal depended upon whether the worshippers were in earnest as to how far they obtained spiritual guidance and strength; but after hearing Mr. Jast's explanations of ritual, the question arose in his mind, do the priests and people understand what they do in the same way and spirit as had been presented by the lecturer? Had they been instructed in the mystical significance of the ceremonies in which they participated? He was very much afraid that they had not. He felt that there was a useful suggestion, that might be helpful to magnetic healers, in the method adopted for 'fixing' or retaining the 'power.' It would be extremely beneficial to their patients if this could be done.

MR. WAKE COOK said that he very much appreciated Mr. Jast's address. The lecturer had clearly shown the esoteric meaning of rituals and their use in securing uniformity or harmony of conditions favourable for the exercise of subtle forces, but he could not help feeling that the tendency of ritualistic practices was to submerge the individual, and this was dangerous. Independent thought was desirable, and the subservience and surrender induced by the processes which had been described was rather a form of death than of spiritual life. He had attended many masses, and while they necessarily appealed to the artistic side of his nature, he could only say that he never felt less spiritual. There was great danger to the individual when ritual took the place of the real thing—the activity of the consciousness and the realisation by the individual spirit of universal truths of the religious life.

MR. E. W. WALLIS, while proposing a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Jast for his able and instructive address, agreed with Mr. Wake Cook in feeling that there was a tendency to lose sight of the object to be achieved in the great attention devoted to the machinery, or details by which that end was sought. He felt that there was too much of the nature of hypnotic suggestion about the methods employed, which were calculated to act as a kind of soothing syrup rather than an

inspiration to personal initiative and individual, responsible self-possession and self-realisation on the highest levels of spiritual expression. There was one feature which was especially repugnant to him as a Spiritualist, and that was the spirit displayed in the wording of the 'form of exorcism' for the banishing of obsessing spirits. The law of love was the highest spiritual law, and Spiritualism had always proclaimed that law and inculcated that unfortunate or evilly-disposed spirits should be treated kindly, helpfully and lovingly: but that horrible, cursing 'form of exorcism,' with its 'woe, woe, woe,' its return of evil for evil in the phrase 'Shalt thou not also be spoiled?' and its decree of banishment for ever 'from the society of the angels,' was inconceivably wicked. It breathed the gospel of hatred, not that of love, and manifested the spirit of a devil rather than that of God. Spiritualism taught that protection against obsessing influences could best be obtained by strong, intelligent, positive goodness and self-mastery, and that loving sympathy with undeveloped spirits, expressed by those who were spiritually-minded themselves, would be far more efficacious as a protection, and also as an uplifting influence upon those spirits, than any exorcism.

The vote of thanks was passed unanimously, and Mr. Jast, in acknowledging it, said that he agreed with the criticism which had been made of the 'form of exorcism'; he had read it to show the method whereby the exorcist rendered himself positive and gained will-power to banish the evil spirit, rather than with approval of the spirit displayed in the words used, which they must remember were taken from an old mediæval treatise.

## IS THEOSOPHY CONDEMNED IN INDIA?

BY (MRS.) J. M. RANSOM.

The article that appeared in 'LIGHT' of the 11th inst. (page 596), although written as a criticism on Theosophy, is primarily a criticism on the Central Hindu College, where the great majority of the teachers are Theosophists. The criticisms offered are answered point by point in the November 'Central Hindu College Magazine' by a profound Hindu scholar, Bhagavân Das; but as this journal will not be generally known in England, your readers might be led to believe that the criticisms represented current opinion, whereas the great volume of Indian opinion approves both of the college and of the Theosophical Society which was its inspiration.

I am a Theosophist—*cela va sans dire*—but for several years held the position of teacher in a Hindu family. I lived in an absolutely Hindu atmosphere, saw their social and family life, and conformed voluntarily to the maintaining of certain 'caste' 'prejudices,' and hence I have obviously some reason for my opinions regarding the effect of Theosophy on Hindu life. So far from the Society increasing any natural inertia or passivity, it is unquestionable that the great public spirit now born in India is largely due to the Society's activity and its ideals. Sixteen years ago any suggestion of an Indian nation was only whispered in the closed security of the home. The different elements in India were so at variance that a 'nation' seemed impossible. Theosophy, however, brought back India's ancient message. Unity was insisted upon, north was drawn to south and east to west. Colleges were formed, chiefly the now well-known Central Hindu College, founded and controlled by the president of the society, where students came from all quarters of India to be trained as loyal sons of the Empire. In Ceylon, too, great work has been done; no 'inertia' here, and the passionate cry of 'Bande Mataram' bears some evidence to the change that has come over India since the Theosophical Society began its work there.

As to Mr. Zutshi's objection that the college sticks to orthodoxy, it must be stated that the college does *not* force 'orthodoxy' on its students in the sense of 'faith without reason.' It sedulously encourages inquiry and advocates 'faith with reason.'

In sticking to agnosticism, Mr. Zutshi is really very orthodox, according to present knowledge, for even the



Western agnostics (whom he pretends to copy) have largely adopted such facts as telepathy, clairvoyance, internal autoscopy, passage of solids through solids, &c.

Regarding Mr. Hardayai's objection that 'Recently a number of English men and English women have come forward as apostles of Hinduism, pure and undefiled. They presume to instruct us in our own holy Shastras,' I would like to quote Bhagavan Das. He says:—

Mr. Hardayai's statement is pure imagination. No English man or woman has presumed to teach his own holy Shastras to Mr. Hardayai and other Hindus. Presumably Mr. Hardayai had in mind Colonel Olcott, Madame Blavatsky, and Mrs. Besant. All three have been teaching and preaching Theosophy and Universal Brotherhood in the first place, and in the second place been strongly recommending to the followers of every religion to make a deeper study of the origins and the scriptures of their respective religions, in the light of Theosophy, so that they might see the truths common to all, and thereby abate their differences and dissensions.

### 'HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING.'

In our issue of November 27th (page 568), we quoted from an article, entitled 'His Own Place,' written by Mr. F. A. Jackson in 'The Baptist,' which was in some respects quite Spiritualistic; now, in 'The Baptist' for December 9th, Mr. Jackson has an article on 'The Ministry of Angels' which is even more on our lines. After asking, 'To how many of us is the ministry of angels a holy and helpful reality?' he replies: 'I imagine there are few of us who give the matter more than a moment's thought, if even that.' This illustrates a point that we have frequently urged, viz., that the majority of persons, even Christian believers, are largely materialistic—often unconsciously so. This world and its interests are so all-important to them that they push aside spiritual considerations: decline to think of and greatly dislike even to talk about death, and the beyond. Should a Spiritualist speak of having seen a spirit they laugh incredulously and declare that 'only foolish people believe in ghosts,' and as for spirit manifestations 'they are contrary to the laws of Nature.' Mr. Jackson says that, as regards angel ministry, Christians 'have clear and definite teaching' and mentions the following Bible instances of angelic appearances:—

Angels appeared to Hagar, to Abraham, to Lot, to Balaam, to the Israelites, to Gideon, to Manoah's wife, to David, to Elijah, to Daniel, to Zacharias, to Joseph, to Mary, to the shepherds, to Christ, to the two women at the sepulchre, to the Apostles, to Peter, to Philip, to Cornelius, to Paul, and to John. To be precise, there are as many as fifty references in the Scriptures to the nature, the office, and the character of the angels.

As to who, or what, the angels are, Mr. Jackson quotes the questioning assurance: 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?' and affirms that the angels are 'ministering spirits—servants, messengers; that, but no more than that.' He repudiates the idea that angels and saints should be worshipped, quite as strongly as any Spiritualist would do, and refers to the exclamation of the angel, when John fell at his feet to worship him: 'See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren . . . worship God.' This indicates also that the angels are incarnate human beings—'fellow-servants' of the Apostle, and of his brethren the prophets.

Mr. Jackson holds that we are not justified 'in dismissing the angels from our thoughts as if they were no more than a poetic idea—"a dear and childlike fragment of an old and pious myth," as so many persons do. We wonder how many of those who this week will join in the hymn, 'Hark! the herald angels sing,' really believe that there are angels about them personally, as they think they believe that angels were around Jesus in the long ago?

If the angels are our 'fellow-servants,' says Mr. Jackson:—

Then their service is on earth as well as in heaven; in the home, the office, the workshop, the study, behind the counter, in the street and the fields, in the church and in the school, as well as on the shining plains of heaven.

To reinforce this view, the reader is reminded that Paul, after enumerating the service and suffering of the faithful servants of God and humanity, from Moses onward, gathers up his argument in the 'sublime conclusion: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,"' evidently implying that the onlookers from the other side were those brave fighters for truth and righteousness:—

It is the clear teaching here that they are not unconscious of the contest and the struggle which make up so much of our life; that they watch us yet, deeply interested, that it matters to them how we run the race that is set before us. . . . Have we grown so matter-of-fact and business-like in these hum-drum or hurly-burly days that the loving vigil of ransomed spirits is of no moment to us? I cannot help thinking that if this indifference has befallen us, we are impoverished.

For my part, I acknowledge this: I never now stand in my place to lead my people in the worship of God, and I never give my soul in the message I deliver, but I think of a congregation present but unseen, interested with more than human interest, sympathetic with more than human sympathy, helpful and inspiring with an attention, a devotion, and a spirit of triumph, to which I owe more than I can say. . . .

But I believe, and know, there is joy and strength in the thought of their untiring ministry and co-operation. I like to think of their protective presence when I leave my house; I like to think of their glorious knowledge when I enter my study; I like to think of their eyes of watchful love when I lie down to sleep; I like to think of their delightful greeting with each new morning; and, as I told you, I never now stand before my people without the impressive feeling that they, too, are there.

Mr. Jackson evidently realises, as does Dr. Horton, that the doctrine of angel ministry, as a doctrine simply, is valueless, a mere sentiment, and that, as Dr. Horton says: 'A man's life will be totally different when he begins to be conscious that there are other presences than human wherever he goes, and there must come into all his conduct a certain beauty, a dignity, a harmony, a gravity, a simplicity, and a joy when he remembers the angels.'

### A STRANGE TRYST.

Some time ago I made use of the following illustration in a sermon on 'A Strange Tryst.' My subject was the words of the angel, recorded by St. Mark, spoken to the women at the Master's tomb: 'He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.' An appointment had been made on one side of the grave which could only be kept on the other. This is the illustration:—

St. Stephen Harding, the famous abbot of Cîteaux—an Englishman, albeit his lifework was done beyond our shores—passed through a period of grave anxiety and of doubt which threatened to sink into despair. He had been chiefly responsible for the foundation of a new monastery, and he had led to occupy it a company of devout and earnest men who were at one with him in their belief that greater strictness of life than that with which they had hitherto been accustomed was necessary if they were to prove themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

The site of the new house was marshy and insalubrious and the food supplies were scanty. This was part of the stern discipline which in other respects was so severe that the harshest criticisms were passed upon it by all other monks who sought to reach Heaven by paths somewhat less thorny.

The faith of the abbot was strong and his zeal unquenchable; but his heart began to sink as, during one period of his rule, the brothers began to die one after the other in mournful succession, and there were none coming to take their places. Was it possible after all that they were attempting more than God required of them? Could it be that their critics were right?

Oppressed by the sense of his responsibility for those whom he loved like sons, he obeyed the summons to attend, along with the brothers, the passing of another who had fallen before the strange malady which was decimating their ranks. Coming into the presence of the dying man, surrounded as he was by mournful figures, the abbot proceeded to address him in terms which astonished all who heard: 'Thou seest, dearest brother, in what great weariness and failing of heart we are, for we have done our best to enter upon the straight and narrow way, which our most blessed father Benedict has proposed in his rule, and yet we are not well assured whether this our way of life is pleasing to God.'



He then mentioned the frequent deaths, the dearth of novices and his fear lest their order perish; and said: 'Wherefore, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for whose love we have entered upon the straight and narrow way which He proposes to His followers in the Gospel, and by virtue of thine obedience I command thee, at whatever time and in whatever way the grace of the same our Lord may determine, that thou return to us and give information touching this our state, as far as His mercy will allow.'

The brethren were appalled at this strange charge, but the dying man, with a bright smile lighting up his features, said: 'Willingly will I do, my lord and father, what thou commandest, if only I, through the help of thy prayers, shall be allowed to fulfil thy command.'

A few days after this remarkable scene the abbot with the brethren was at work in the fields. When the time for mid-day rest came Stephen went apart from the others and occupied his time in meditation and prayer, and while thus employed he was startled, though not surprised, to behold, shrouded in glorious light, the brother to whom, before his decease, he had given the strange command. Stephen asked him how he fared, and he answered: 'Well, good father abbot, well it is with me and well be it with thee.' He declared that he had returned in order to cheer and encourage the lonely worker by assuring him that his work was acceptable in the Master's eyes, and he concluded with a remarkable prophecy, which seemed at the moment extravagant enough, that, 'the grief at thy want of children to leave behind thee, which gnaws deep into thy heart, shall very soon disappear and turn to joy and triumph. . . . For behold from this time forth, the Lord hath done great things for you, in sending many men unto you, and among them very many of noble birth and learned.'

Joy and thanksgiving filled to overflowing the heart of the aged abbot. He continued to gaze at his visitor until at length he said to Stephen: 'It is now time, my lord abbot, that I return to Him who sent me: I pray thee dismiss me in the strength of thy blessing.'

At the thought of assuming authority in such a presence the old man sank back abashed. 'I ought rather to be blessed by thee; and therefore I pray thee to bless me.'

Standing as he was wont to do in the earth life when summoned before his abbot in the little parlour at Cîteaux, the brother discarnate acknowledged the dignity of a father in God, thanked him for his care, and besought his blessing. That given, he at once disappeared from sight.

Soon after, the rude knocker—a hammer hung by the monastery gate—was used, and no fewer than thirty men entered and asked to be received as novices. These were the drops which heralded the shower. Amongst them there were both the learned and the great, and they were led by one destined ere long to occupy a place of commanding influence in Europe and to leave behind him for all time a memory like ointment poured forth, to be known throughout the ages as the great Saint Bernard.

Comment is needless on a tale like this, for criticism matters not: but none surely can fail to recognise in it a beautiful instance of spirit return.

J. B. GARDINER.

#### A GLEAM THROUGH THE DARKNESS.

To those who believe in the life to come, the raising of that dark veil which hides those we love from our sorrowing eyes is indeed a heaven-sent blessing; and to any who have had this privilege it is a sacred duty to relate these experiences for the help and comfort of others.

Impelled by this wish, I will therefore commence by telling you of an evil-omened mummy charm. I was returning from a trip to the Colonies, and as we were to spend Christmas on board ship, the first officer, at whose table I sat with other passengers, said: 'Now, ladies, who would like to come and help stir the plum puddings?' A chorus of voices cried, 'We will all come'; so at the appointed hour we adjourned to the kitchen, armed with our small silver charms which were to be consigned to the plum pudding, the thimble, the threepenny bit, &c.; but one novelty in the contributions was a little silver mummy given by a lady who said she had bought it of an Arab, who declared he had taken it from a tomb. It was beautifully made, and the malevolent little face was quite perfect.

Christmas Day came, and the pudding appeared; it was first handed to me, and on cutting it the mummy fell to my lot.

I laughed gaily, saying, 'That is a sign that I shall ere long see the Pyramids.' 'Ah!' said the lady who had given the charm, 'that may be so, but it also means death.'

I confess an icy shiver ran over me, and an unaccountable feeling of apprehension that I shook off with difficulty seemed to possess me.

In due course we reached Marseilles, and on getting my letters I was deeply distressed to hear that one of my daughters was to undergo a very serious operation. I returned to the hotel at once and made arrangements to leave by the next quick train for London. When my packing was over I thought of the mummy charm, and recollecting my lady friend's remark I took the ill-omened thing and, rolling it up in paper, I opened the window and dropped it into the street gutter, saying, 'Go! you shall work no more ill to anyone.' This little incident did not tend to reassure me, and I never had a moment free from anxiety till, thank God, my daughter had quite recovered and was again safe in her own home.

But little I knew how much trouble still remained for me to face, when only two months later a dear friend of twenty-five years' standing succumbed to heart failure after a few days' illness.

Two years passed away, the misery of which I hardly now dare to recall. Twenty-five years of unbroken friendship severed in a few brief moments, and a dreary waste of years yet to come seemed all that was left for me in this sorrowful star. But one who knew my trouble and deeply sympathised, roused me out of my apathy. 'Come, I will take you to my old friend Mr. Husk. I have known him for many years, and with his help we may be able to see and communicate with our friend—come.' A private séance was arranged—we were five in all—and my joy may be imagined when my friend appeared. He did not speak, but a little later he laid his hand on mine and pressed it, kindly as if he would say, 'Be comforted, I am really here.'

Since that day I have been to many séances at Mr. Husk's, and the materialisation of my friend gets stronger. I can see the colour in his face, he smiles and speaks in a strong, distinct voice, which at first he was not able to do. I can now face the remaining years of my life in confidence. The cloud has by God's mercy been lifted and the Angel of Peace has spread his protecting wings over my head. I can doubt and grieve no more, and I pray that it may be the same for all who suffer.

E. I. MASSY.

#### TRUTH IS ONE AND UNIVERSAL.

The 'Swastika' says:—

The following expressions of the 'golden rule' ought to convince the most prejudiced person living that Truth is universal and that it belongs to no one time or 'sect.' Herein, also, one may find all that is essential in active 'religion,' and since it is a sentiment in which all races concur, it is not so necessary to 'spread the light' as it is that human beings in all parts of the world should live up to the light they already have:—

Do as you would be done by.—PERSIAN.

Do not that to a neighbour which you would take ill from him.—GRECIAN.

What you would not wish done to yourself, do not unto others.—CHINESE.

One should seek for others the happiness one desires for oneself.—BUDDHIST.

He sought for others the good he desired for himself. Let him pass on.—EGYPTIAN.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.—CHRISTIAN.

Let none of you treat his brother in a way he himself would dislike to be treated.—MOHAMMEDAN.

The true rule in life is to guard and do by the things of others as they do by their own.—HINDU.

The law imprinted on the hearts of all men is to love the members of society as themselves.—ROMAN.

Whatsoever you do not wish your neighbour to do to you, do not unto him. This is the whole law. The rest is a mere exposition of it.—JEWISH.



## JOTTINGS.

The Rev. R. P. McAuliffe, curate at St. John's Church, Sevenoaks, according to a report in 'The Daily News,' in his efforts to prepare lads for confirmation, has been teaching them that Spiritualism is 'a growing evil,' and described it as 'false teaching.' He has also issued some 'notes' for their instruction, which have aroused considerable feeling, because he states that it was foretold that false teachers would arise, and then proceeds to identify such teachers with the ministers of the Evangelical Free Churches. The vicar, it is said, agrees with the action of his curate. He explained to 'The Daily News' representative that 'the teachings taught by other bodies than our own are false doctrines.' If this kind of thing goes on the fight in the near future will be between Rome and Reason, and the religion of brotherly love will be even less conspicuous than it is at present.

Spontaneous psychical phenomena seem to be on the increase, or else they are being more closely observed and more freely reported than formerly. In a letter, recently received from a valued correspondent, who, however, prefers to remain unknown, we were informed that strange phenomena frequently occur in his home. We are informed that 'nearly all movable things in one room were displaced at 4.30 a.m. A heavy swing mirror was lifted out of its sockets and jammed between the window frame and the dressing table, and all the crockery and china laid out on the floor. At the same time there was a loud rumbling noise, like the moving of furniture, which lasted quite seven or eight minutes, ending with knocks on the floor as of a hammer. None of the things were broken.' These manifestations are extremely interesting and it by no means follows that, because they are startling, they are due to evil spirits.

That there are many more mediums in private life than even by Spiritualists are aware of, is being borne in upon us constantly by the numerous letters which reach us from correspondents who ask for counsel regarding their experiences. Undoubtedly psychic powers are on the increase, and we fully anticipate that coming generations will be richly endowed with that susceptibility to spirit influence upon which mediumship depends, so that experiences now regarded with wonder and spoken of as 'abnormal' will ere long be accepted as quite natural and matter-of-fact. While there may be some danger that 'familiarity will breed contempt,' it will be a distinct gain to have psychic sensitiveness lifted out of the atmosphere of distrust and 'taboo' with which it is at present surrounded. Psychics are not necessarily hysterical, or unbalanced, dishonest, 'degenerate,' or insane. Neither is it true that they are invariably sub-conscious liars and falsifiers, and when the mediumistic temperament is studied and cultivated as naturally as are the artistic, musical and religious temperaments we shall follow wiser methods and get better results.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents, and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views which may elicit discussion.*

## The World's Fundamental Faith.

SIR.—Time and events have shown that the same fundamental ideas shine through all religions and creeds, viz., belief in a Supreme Being and Creator, also belief in a life after death—the picture of what that life is to be varying in accordance with the conditions of each set of believers.

Now, in this modern world of thought and research we are coming to see universal truths as they are, and a fierce controversy is being aroused in consequence; but such results must ever be, for the world's awakening is always heralded by antagonisms for which the pioneers must suffer. It is, however, both a comfort and a help to progressive minds to know that our nearest friends and relatives can and do commune with us; that those who are chosen to work for the spread of truth have 'guides' and helpers appointed to them; that enlightened spirits are still progressing in the world beyond, and that their wise thoughts and strong influences reach us as inspirations and suggestive thought impulses, operating upon and expressed by, or through, the world's advanced workers, who often 'build better than they know,' because they are thus guided from the unseen.—Yours, &c.,

M. A.

## Psychic Force and Spiritualism.

SIR.—The existence of psychic force may be taken as an established fact; that it exists in different degrees in different individuals is pretty well proved; that it is specially present in mediums is more than probable. This force is doubtless the power employed in table-turning, levitation, &c., and may be the agency whereby thought transference is possible between operator and subject, and even the 'cross-correspondences' about which we read so much; but that it will account for the phenomena of Spiritualism is quite another matter. The scientific investigation of psychic force, as such, will not furnish an explanation of those intelligent communications which, from time immemorial, have been supposed to have been made direct from the spirit world.—Yours, &c.,

C. HELLMANN.

## Christmas Greetings from W. J. Colville.

SIR.—Now that Christmastide is with us I wish to express through 'LIGHT' my best wishes for you all and for the many friends whom I can only hope to reach through your ever hospitable columns. I am now in Washington, which in winter is a centre of activities of every kind, and often speak to three large audiences on a Sunday, and almost every evening in the week I address various organisations and semi-private gatherings, and all centres of Spiritualistic, Theosophic, New Thought and kindred interests are flourishing. As this is merely a Christmas salutation, I will reserve all other matters of interest for some future occasion.

With best Christmas wishes to all, and the earnest hope that 1910 may surpass 1909 in spiritual illumination and all desirable bestowments, I trust that I may some day work again in my beloved native land.—Yours, &c.,

W. J. COLVILLE.

402, A St., S.E., Washington, U.S.A.

## Spirit Photography.

SIR.—With reference to Mrs. Girdlestone's statement in your article on 'Experiences with Mr. Wyllie,' 'LIGHT,' November 6th, that a reversed print from the glass side of a negative gives a blurred picture, may I say that among the photographs taken for me by this medium years ago, there are three examples of reversed portraits; that is to say, portraits of spirit friends which came at one sitting, came in a reversed position at another, but they are all equally distinct. These reversed pictures are so frequent among this medium's photographs that they seem to be purposely given for some object. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the reversing is done on the spirit side? These portraits being probably taken, not from the individual spirit, but from a thought-form picture or something of the sort. Many of the facts of physical mediumship go to prove that the operators on the other side constantly make use of material objects in the medium's surroundings as aids in producing phenomena.

I do not know enough about photography to dogmatise, but throw this out as a hint to those better able to judge. At the same time, it seems to me that those who fancy that these reversed pictures are evidence of tricky mediumship have not thought out the subject.

Take this case of Mrs. Girdlestone's. First, the photograph of Mr. Girdlestone sent to Los Angeles would have had to have been photographed, then a print made from the negative from the glass side, this again photographed on to the plate taken at Glenbeg House, after, presumably, being worked up and clearly defined in some manner. All this work and waste of time the supposed medium undertakes, at considerable loss to himself, all for the sake of what? Playing the fool and imposing upon the public for a joke!

Is not all this very absurd, impracticable, hypercritical, and far-fetched? No one could carry on such a tricky business for a couple of weeks without being caught and exposed.—Yours, &c.,

A. K. VENNING.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

'The Tarot of the Bohemians.' By 'PAPUS.' Wm. Rider & Son, Ltd., 164, Aldersgate-street, E.C. Price 6s. net.

'Nervousness.' By A. T. SCHOFIELD, M.D. Wm. Rider & Son, 164, Aldersgate-street, E.C. Price 1s. net.

'Mutual Recognition in the Life Beyond.' By H. H. T. CLIFFE, M.A. Elliot Stock, 61 and 62, Paternoster-row, E.C. Price 2s. net.

THE UNION OF LONDON SPIRITUALISTS will hold a Conference meeting at the Hackney Society's Hall, 240a, Amhurst-road, on Sunday, January 2nd. At 3 p.m., Mr. G. T. Brown will open a discussion. Speakers at 7 p.m., Messrs. G. Tayler Gwinn, G. T. Brown, M. Clegg, G. F. Tilby.